A LETTER TO Mr. CONGREVE,

Occasion'd by the Death of the

Countess Dowager OF MANCHESTER,

Late WIFE to his Excellency the Right Honourable

Charles Montague,

One of the Lords Justices of *England*, first Commissioner of the Treasury, and Chancellor of the *Exchequer*, &c.

Quis desiderio sit Pudor aut Modus
Tam chari Capitis? præcipe lugubres
Cantus Melpomene, &c.-----
Hor. Ode xxiv. lib. i.

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LETTER

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Occasion'd by the Death of the

Countess Dowager

OF

MANCHESTER, &c.

HOW long ye Bards! must your great Patron mourn:
How long his Heart by pious Pangs be torn?
Er ye attempt to bring his ~~Pangs~~ Pains Relief,
And ease his Anguish with *Confederate Grief.*
Methinks, when his *large* Soul is struck with Woe,
All Hearts shou'd suffer, and All Eyes shou'd flow.
The Sympathetick Pain shou'd spread around,
The Poets Patron, every Poet wound,
And not one grateful Muse, without her Tears be (found.

O *Congreve!* ſound again your tuneful Reed,
To which you ſung the great *Paſtora* dead.
How, on thy Verſe the Mourning Shepherds hung!
How bleſt the Poet! how ador'd the Song!
Not the *Scicilian*, nor the *Mantuan* Bard,
With juſter Wonder, and Delight were heard.
Thy charming Voice, O *Congreve!* once more raiſe,
Another *MARY* challenges thy Lays.
Again thro' Woods and Vales thy Sorrow ſpread,
Another *Hero* mourns, another *Heroine* dead.
Draw.
(For tho' the Poets be the Nobler Part,
Painting to Poeſie is a Kindred Art)
The Muſes *Kneller* boldly draw their Saint,
In the Caſtalian never fading Paint:
In deathleſs Numbers, with a Hand Divine,
Draw all the wonders of the vaſt deſign,
That made her Life with ſuch ſtrong Glories ſhine.

Firſt draw her riſing from Illuſtrious Blood,
Ancient in *Vertue*, by Preſcription Good.
Give to her Perſon then each Native Grace;
Nor loſe one Blooming Honour of her Face.
Then in the ſtrongeſt Colours thou can'ſt find,
Draw all the wond'rous Beauty's of her Mind.

Shew

Shew her ſtill throughly *Good*, but not *Preciſe* :
Without Evaſion *Juſt*, without aſſuming *Wiſe* :
And make her firſt a pious Daughter prove ;
Then an Example of connubial Love ;
A tender and a fruitful Mother be ;
Then make her happy in her Progeny.
Make her but what *SHE* was, and *SHE* alone,
A zealous Friend, yet Enemy to none.
On her in vain the Poor did never call,
Many her Bounty reach'd, her Juſtice All.
A *barren Pity* ſhe diſdain'd to give ; (lieve.
Where Worth and Want were joyn'd, ſhe'd ſtill re-
Her gen'rous Care all her Domeſtick's ſhar'd,
Like Heav'ns, her Service met a ſure Reward.
To *GOOD*, in all impetuouſly ſhe tends,
The beſt of Daughters, Mothers, Wives, and Friends!
Merits enough to juſtifie ev'n Pride,
Yet humble *She*, as if they'd ne'r been try'd !

O ! learn ye *Great Ones !* if you wou'd be Great,
Of her your doubtful Grandeur to compleat.
If y'are Ambitious, as you wou'd be thought,
A true Ambition, by her Deeds, be ~~th~~ought.

He

He that to *Titles* wou'd *confine* his Fame,
Boasts but a worthless *Tympany* of Name;
Vain of his *Bulk*, and proud of his *Disease*,
He may perhaps his own *fond* Fancy please;
Yet All that see him, if they're truly wise,
Laugh at the *Folly*, but the *Fool* despise.
This only *Greatness*, can the Wiser find,
A knowing Head, and a large Vertuous Mind.

Now change the Scene and draw the mournful (Room,
Where the best *Heroine* yields to her last Doom.
Place her sad Friends and Children round the Bed,
And draw the mourning *Hero* kneeling near her head.
The various Forms of Grief spread round the Place,
And but in *hers* Paint Anguish in each Face.
Yet if a Glimps of that her Visage move,
(Secure by *Life*, and *Faith* of Joys above)
Make it th'Effect of Piety and Love.
Disperse the Portions of just Grief around;
Let none without their proper Woe be found.
Duty, and mournful Piety in one
Make the distinctive Sorrow of her Noble Son.
Then add to these, in each bright Daughters Face,
Tears full of Tenderness, and Charming Grace.

In

In drooping Friends mix Gratitude and Love,
Tho' Love in all muſt a chief Colour prove.
Then at a diſtance place her Servants Tears,
Deſponding Looks, and all their grateful Fears.
Draw the contagious Sorrows ſpreading far,
To All that knew her, give a mournful ſhare.
When all theſe Colours you have ſhewn of Woe.
Yet you can ne'r the *Hero*'s deeper Sorrows ſhew.

When the fam'd *Greek* a Pourtraict in his Mind,
Worthy Love's ſoft Divinity deſign'd,
To give his *Venus* her Celeſtial Form,
He took from every Beauty ſome Immortal Charm;
So if you'd paint the *Anguiſh* of his Mind,
Take Grief's Extreams in every Tender kind.
Take, the fond Mothers o're her darling Child,
That by ſome hard unlucky Fate lyes kill'd.
Take the pathetick Woes that Fortune ſends
To parting Lovers, and to dying Friends.
Th'Imperial Sorrow of the *Grecian* Chief,
Who felt his Daughters and her Mothers Grief,
And yet with-held by Heav'n cou'd give them no Relief.
So griev'd ſad *Hecuba*, to ſee now loſt
Her utmoſt Hope upon the *Thracian* Coaſt.
So mourn'd *Admetus* his expiring Wife.
That for his Safety offer'd up her Life.

For ſo our dying *Heroine* had done, (her own.
Cou'd his have been prolong'd, by ſhortning of

(of Woe,

Thus when thou'ſt drawn this pompous Scene
Where only Sighs and Tears in diſmal Conſort flow;
Tell how at length, ſhe her dread Silence broke,
And her laſt Thoughts in awful Accents ſpoke.
Of Heav'nly, and Myſterious Wonders told,
Such as when Sacred Viſions they unfold,
Prophets inſpir'd, and dying Saints behold.
But when ſhe ſaw her Lord allow no Reſt
To the tumultuous Sorrows of his Breaſt,
Her ſelf to him ſhe thus at laſt addreſt.

"Grieve not my Loſs with ſuch impetuous Woe,
"I ſhall not be far off, tho to my Heav'n I go:
"For if by Heav'n no local Space be meant,
"But every where throughout th'*Immenſe Extent*,
"Mine will be neareſt thee, when I'm at large,
"T'aſſiſt thy Guarding Angel, in his mighty Charge.
"But now farewel! My Soul is on its flight,
"And deadly vapours ſwim before my Sight:
"Farewel! I'm loſt in vaſt Surrounding Night.

She

She ſaid no more, but with her feeble Hand
The weeping *Hero* graſp'd, as at a ſtand,
If yet ſhe ſhou'd obey Fates hard Command.
On him with ſuch pathetic Looks ſhe gaz'd,
As if to go to Heav'n from him ſhe ſcarce were (pleas'd.

This dear Exceſs, this pious Force of Love,
His Merit, ſure, muſt juſtifie above.
His Soul's ſo form'd of Worth in ev'ry Kind,
That when we view it, we tranſported find
The perfect Image of th'Eternal Mind.

A Judgment *Clear* in all he undertakes,
And nothing then his Reſolution ſhakes.
No *Sphynx* of State his Wiſdom can perplex,
As if like Heav'n he Judg'd, by Cauſes, not Effects.
When All were* *foil'd*, and in a wild Affright,
Gave up to Storms and more perplexing Night,
The mighty ſhatter'd Veſſel of the State,
He like a God ſtep'd in, and reſcu'd her from Fate.
Our *Britiſh* Heav'n no *Atlas* then cou'd bear, (Fear,
All own'd their Strength leſs pow'rful than their
And, on this only *Hercules*, devolv'd our ſinking *Sphere*.

* The Coining the whole Caſh of the Nation, which the moſt Ancient and Experienc'd Heads, by reaſon of the lowneſs of the *Exchequer*, thought impoſſible, Mr. *Montague* undertook, and as happily accompliſh'd, to the ſaving of our Liberties, Trade, *&c.* and to the everlaſting Benefit of the whole Nation.

So

So when the Poets *Hero's* in Diſtreſs,
And his own Vertue can't aſſure Succeſs,
Some mighty God or Goddeſs brings Relief,
And from th'impending Danger ſhields the *fated*
(Chief.

Tho ſtill in Courts, their Servile Vice he flies,
Knows not their *Cunning*, for he's *truly* Wiſe;
Like the fam'd *Three*, untouch'd amid the Fire,
Still from his Steps the Sloping Flames retire;
On him no hold can all their Fury take,
His Soul's of ſuch *invulnerable* Make!

Thus while deluding *Promiſers* of Court
Make poor depending Miſery their Sport,
Give a *falſe* Hope, to raiſe a *fleeting* Joy,
And ſo with greater Cruelty deſtroy,
He ſurely ends his happy Suppliants Pain,
His Word gives Life, for *that* can not be *vain.*
His *large capacious* Soul, his generous Mind,
Form'd for the Benefit of All Mankind,
To every Nobler Good's impetuouſly enclin'd.

Such lively Features of the Powr's above,
Might well awhile theſe tender Struglings move,
And ſtop her Mind on ſuch a Kindred Love.

But

But now the great Original prevails,
Behold ſhe dies! each Vital Pow'r now fails. ----

O *Congreve!* here, draw or'e an awful Veil,
No Art can Paint, no mighty Poet tell
The *Hero*'s Pangs, and Tortures when ſhe fell.
From hateful Throngs, and ev'n from Friends he flies,
To lonely Shades, and there, a living Death he dies!
Miſer in only this, he hugs his Care, (a ſhare.
And with ſtrange Avarice of Woe, denys his Friends

Ah! grieve no more for what you can't retrieve!
You wrong the *World*, while thus in vain you grieve.
Thus for his Darling the bright God retir'd,
Left Earth unwarm'd, and Poets uninſpir'd:
The charming Face of Nature droop'd away,
Languiſh'd in baleful Nights for his Delay,
For Natures Beautys ſpring, from his kind genial (Ray.

Thus, Sir, while YOU to private Grief retire,
The Public ſuffers, and we all expire,
For *You're* our Genial Heat, our animating Fire.

Ah! grieve no more! for ſhe is bleſt above,
And paſt from yours to an Eternal Love!
Let that for us your fruitleſs Grief remove.

O *Congreve!*
Now raiſe thy Voice, now tow'r above the height
Of the *Meonian*, or the *Mantuan* Flight.
Like *Milton* Soar, like *Milton* too declare
Amazing things, that Man's unus'd to hear,
That Ecſtaſie the raviſh'd Soul, through the glad (liſtning Ear.

Her Heav'n born Mind, from her illuſtrious Clay,
Now ſhoots aloft to everlaſting Day, (way.
Ten thouſand God-like Forms conduct her on her
Swifter than Thought ſhe's paſs'd the Azure Sky,
Thro' Heav'ns high Road, the dazling Galaxie,
Beyond the Ken of any Mortal Eye,
To th' *Empyreum* ſhe purſues her Flight,
But there I've loſt Her in th' Abyſs of Light:
In Joys unutterable, that know no Bound,
But in Eternal Circles, eternally move round.

Ev'n what I ſee, cannot by me be told!
My agonizing Soul the *VISION* can't unfold!

By

By anxious Cares, and preſſing Wants confin'd
The ſtrugling Glory rolls within my Mind,
While ſcarce a Glimps breaks thro' upon Mankind
Thus in Eclipſes the refulgent Sun,
Strives with th'invading Darkneſs of the Moon ;
The Source of Day, involv'd in Forreign Night,
Darts forth, but here, and there, a ſickly Beam of
(Light.

O! wou'd thy *Patron's* Smiles enlarge this Fire!
It nobly wou'd my longing Breaſt Inſpire,
And tune with wondrous ſounds my charming Lire.
A God-like Rage ſhou'd raiſe each mighty Verſe,
Worthy the dazling Glories I'd rehearſe.
As them my Numbers ſhou'd be fierce, and ſtrong,
Div[illegible] my Subject, and Divine my Song!
Above the favour'd Lays, of all th' harmonious
(Throng.

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